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(54) **MEASURING DEVICE FOR MEASURING A SHEET OF MATERIAL IN A SHEET BENDING BRAKE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The subject invention presents a sheet bending brake assembly and a measuring device for the sheet bending brake assembly. The assembly includes a support. First and second clamping members are mounted on the support for movement between open and closed positions. The clamping members have respective clamping surfaces that extend in a parallel and opposing relationship to each other in the closed position to clamp a sheet of material between the surfaces. The measuring device is for measuring the sheet of material relative to the clamping members. The measuring device includes a base and an elongated arm pivotally connected to the base at a pivot. The elongated arm extends from the pivot to a distal end for pivotal movement about the pivot between a retracted position and an extended measuring position for overlying the sheet of material.

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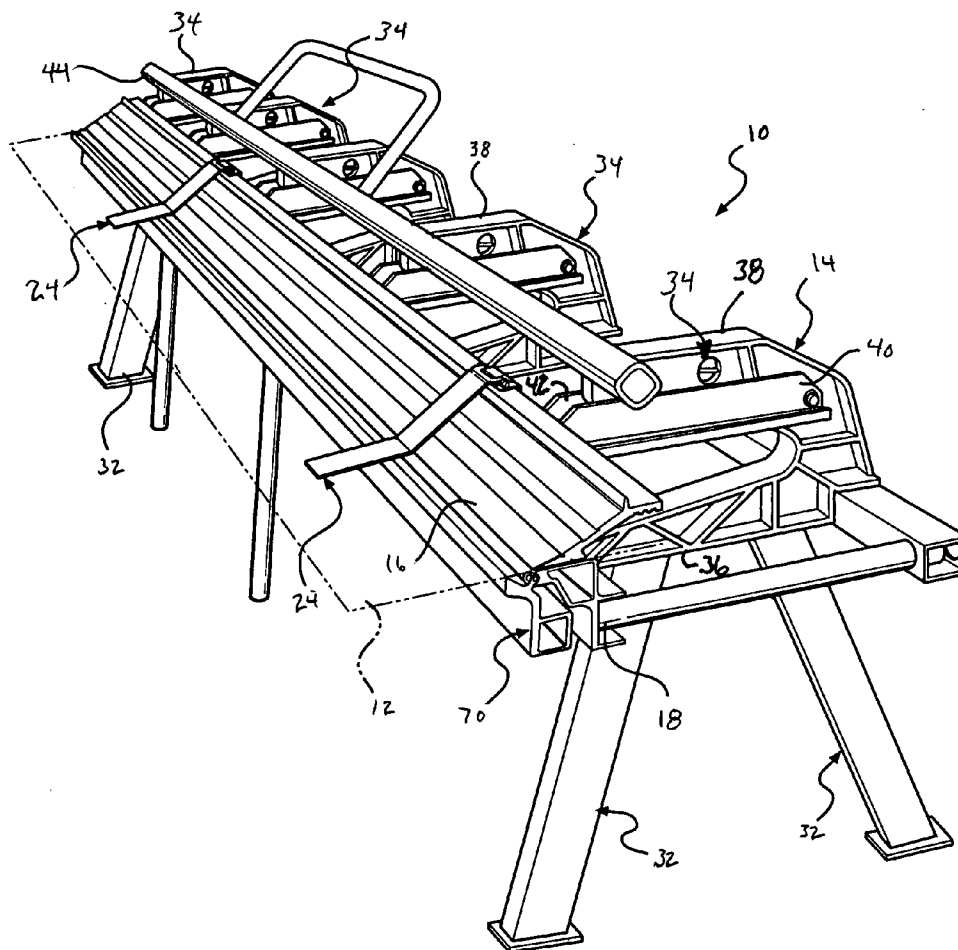
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(60) **Provisional application No. 60/479,200**, filed on Jun. 17, 2003.



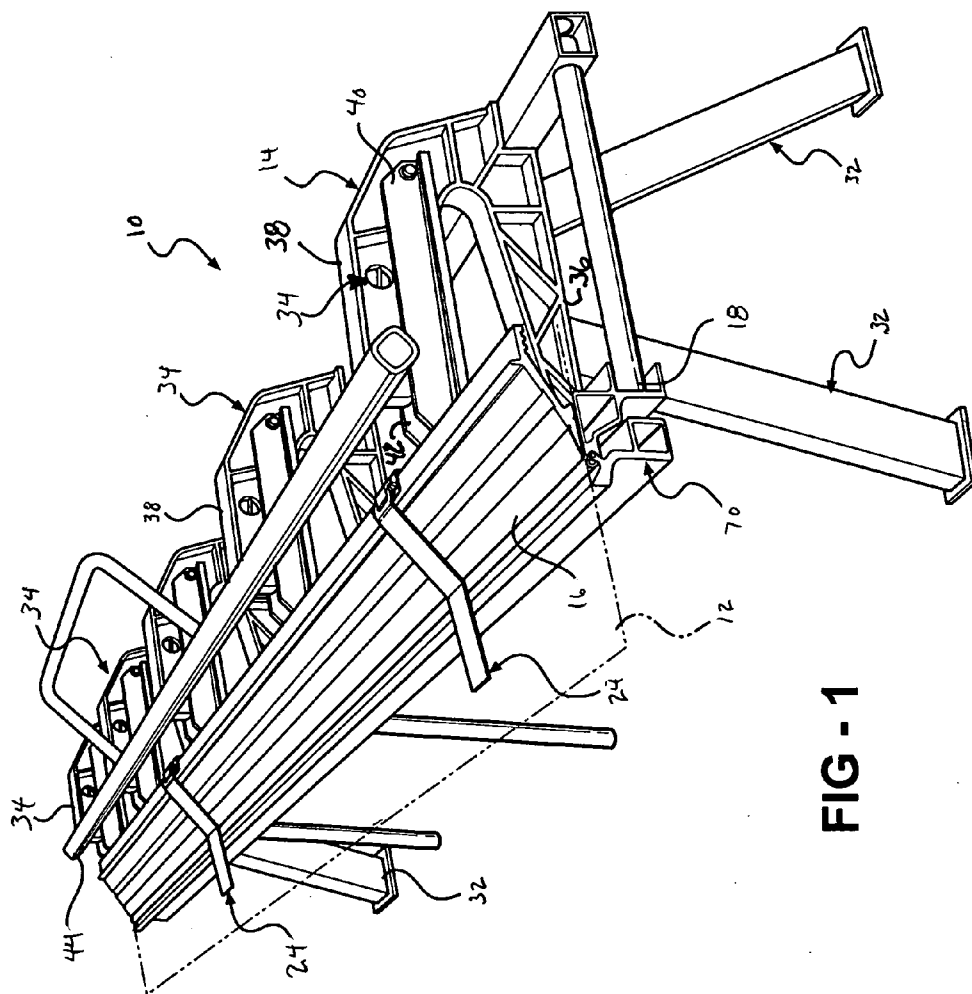


FIG - 1

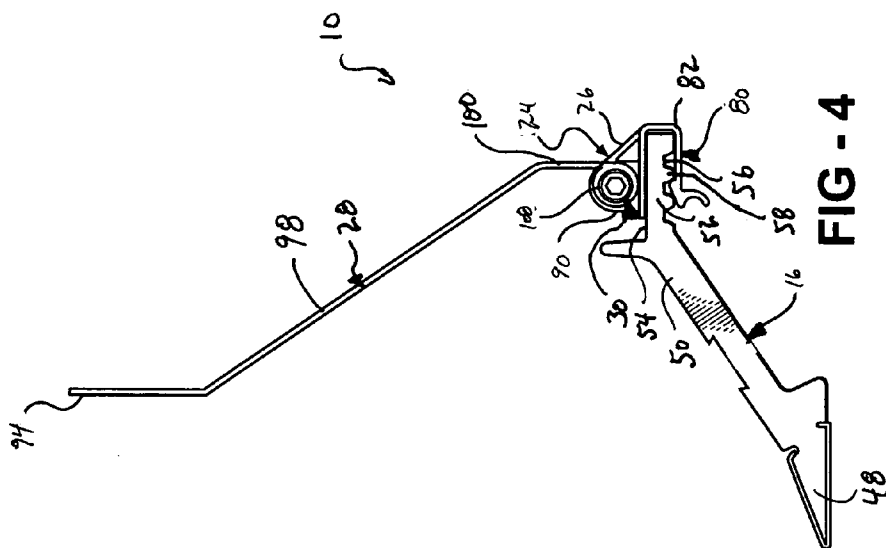


FIG - 4

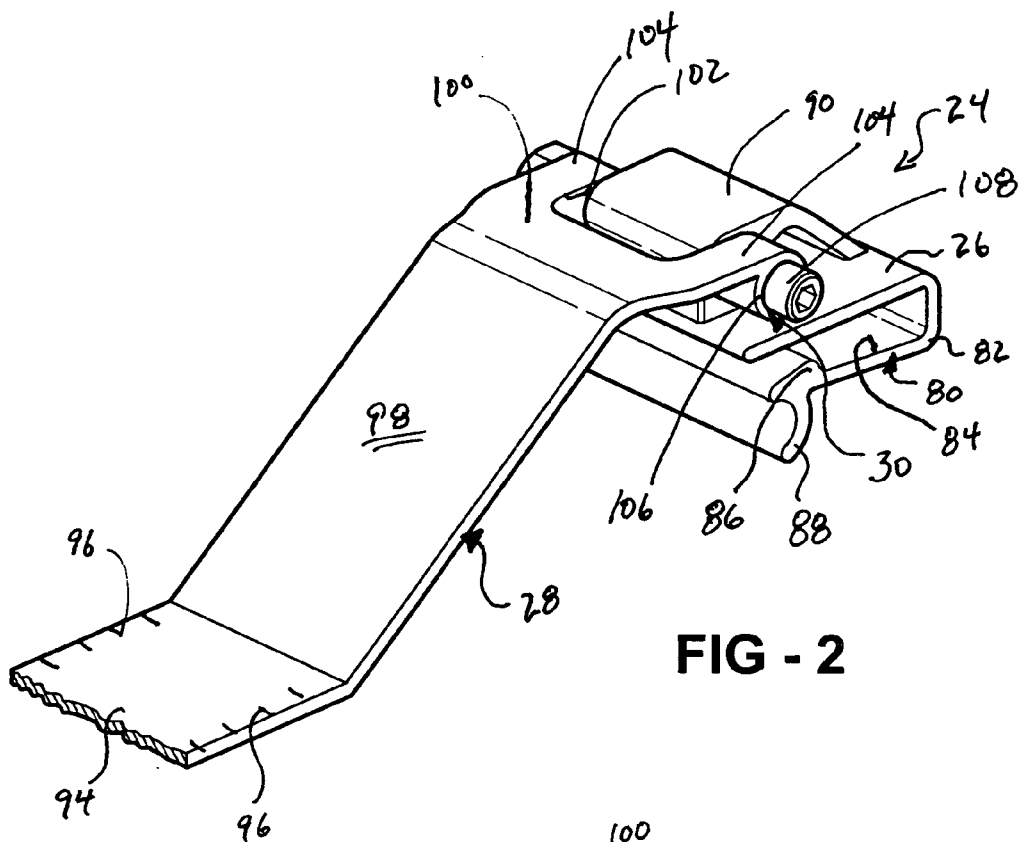


FIG - 2

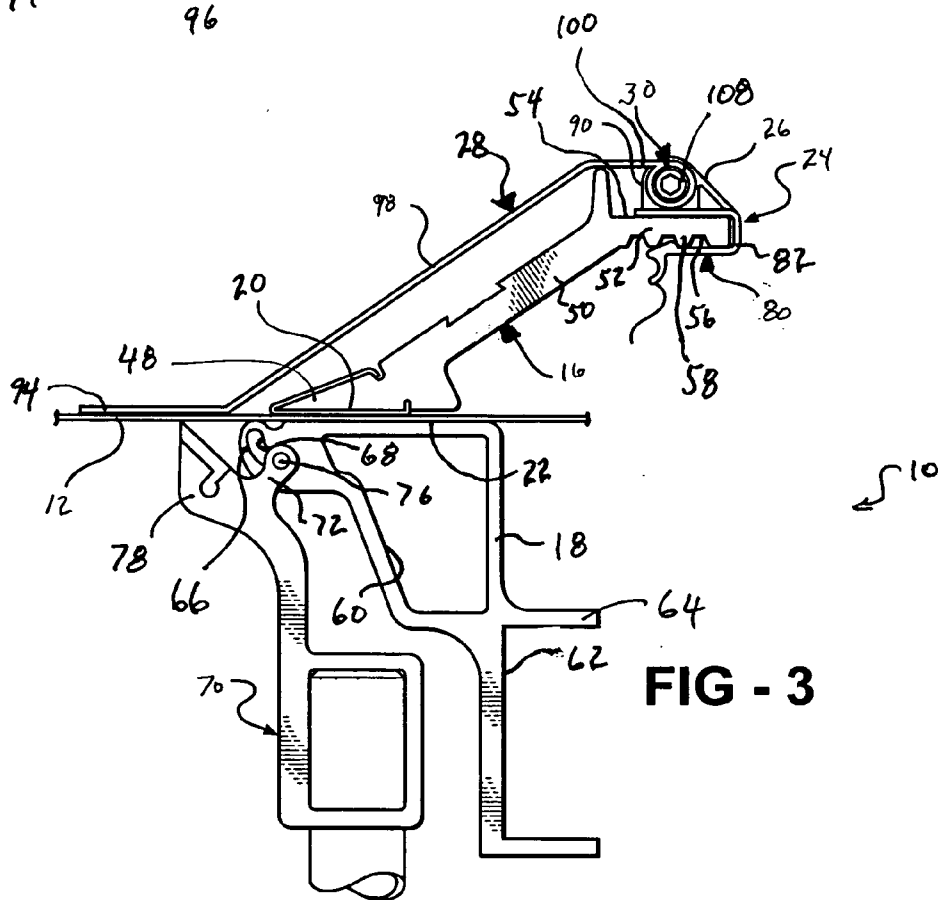


FIG - 3

**MEASURING DEVICE FOR MEASURING A
SHEET OF MATERIAL IN A SHEET BENDING
BRAKE**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This patent application claims priority to and all advantages of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/479,200, which was filed on Jun. 17, 2003.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This invention generally relates to measurement devices for sheet bending brake assemblies and, more particularly, to measurement devices for measuring a sheet of material in sheet bending brakes.

[0004] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] Sheet bending brake assemblies have been used for many years to selectively form sheets of metal into various configurations. One primary use of such brakes is to form siding used to finish the exterior of a building.

[0006] Measurement devices for measuring various dimensions are known in the art and include such devices as measuring sticks and tape measures. Such measurement devices, when used in conjunction with sheet bending brakes, can be awkward for an operator of the brake to use while operating the brake and/or one of its accessories, and dramatically increase the time it takes to make proper measurements of sheets of material to be cut or formed on the sheet bending brake. In addition, the measurement devices of the prior art cannot be mounted on the brake assemblies in both a convenient position to be readily available when needed, yet positioned out of the way from operation of the brake assemblies when no longer used.

[0007] For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,661,996 discloses a standard retractable tape measure mounted to the brake assembly. The brake assembly includes a carriage assembly for supporting sheet metal to be bent. A tape portion of the tape measure is connected to the carriage assembly and moves along with the carriage assembly. The tape measure, however, is mounted to a side of the brake assembly, and is thus not easily observable to a person positioning the sheet metal in the brake assembly. Furthermore, the tape measure is prone to damage since the tape portion remains on the carriage assembly during operation of the brake assembly.

[0008] Thus, it would be advantageous to develop a measurement device, or measuring device, which overcomes the deficiencies in the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND
ADVANTAGES

[0009] The subject invention presents a sheet bending brake assembly and a measuring device for the sheet bending brake assembly. The assembly includes a support. First and second clamping members are mounted on the support for movement between open and closed positions. The clamping members have respective clamping surfaces that extend in a parallel and opposing relationship to each other in the closed position to clamp a sheet of material between the surfaces. The measuring device is for measuring the sheet of material relative to the clamping members. The

measuring device includes a base and an elongated arm pivotally connected to the base at a pivot. The elongated arm extends from the pivot to a distal end for pivotal movement about the pivot between a retracted position and an extended measuring position for overlying the sheet of material.

[0010] An advantage of the subject invention is the elongated arm may be pivoted into the retracted position to be out of the way of operation of the brake assembly when not in use, and pivoted into the extended measuring position when in use. Another advantage is the elongated arm is not prone to damage during operation or transportation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL
VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated, as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0012] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a sheet bending brake shown in use in conjunction with the measuring device of the subject invention;

[0013] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of the measuring device of **FIG. 1** with an elongated arm pivoted in an extended measuring position;

[0014] **FIG. 3** is a side view of the sheet bending brake including the measuring device of **FIG. 1** with the elongated arm pivoted in the extended measuring position; and

[0015] **FIG. 4** is a partial side view of the measuring device mounted to a clamping member with the elongated arm pivoted in the retracted position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE
INVENTION

[0016] The subject invention provides a sheet bending brake assembly, which is shown generally at **10** in **FIG. 1**. The brake assembly **10** is used for bending or otherwise forming sheets of material, such as metal, plastic, etc. The sheet bending brake assembly **10** includes a support **14**. First and second clamping members **16, 18** are mounted on the support **14** for movement between open and closed positions. The clamping members **16, 18** have respective clamping surfaces **20, 22** that extend in parallel and opposing relationship to each other in the closed position to clamp the sheet of material **12** between the clamping surfaces **20, 22**. The brake assembly **10** further includes a measuring device **24** for measuring the sheet of material **12** relative to the clamping members **16, 18**. The measuring device **24** includes a base **26** and an elongated arm **28** pivotally connected to the base **26** at a pivot **30**. The elongated arm **28** extends from the pivot **30** to a distal end for pivotal movement about the pivot **30** between a retracted position and an extended measuring position for overlying the sheet of material **12**.

[0017] As best shown in **FIG. 1**, the support **14** for the brake assembly **10** includes support legs **32** for elevating the brake assembly **10**. The support legs **32** are generally positioned at angles with respect to each other to maximize stability of the brake assembly **10**. The support **14** further includes longitudinally spaced c-shaped frame members **34**.

Each frame member 34 includes a lower arm 36 and an upper arm 38 which overlies the lower arm 36 in spaced relation thereto.

[0018] Preferably, the first clamping member 16 is a movable clamping member 16. Means are provided for moving the first clamping member 16 between the open and closed positions, i.e., away from and toward the second clamping member 18 respectively, to clamp the sheet of material 12 between the clamping members 16, 18. In a preferred embodiment, shown in FIG. 1, the first clamping member 16 is pivotally supported by the support 14 for movement between the open position and the closed position. However, it is to be appreciated that other means are also suitable for moving the first clamping member 16, such as means for providing rectilinear movement of the first clamping member 16 between the open and closed positions.

[0019] Referring to FIG. 1, the support 14 preferably includes pivot bars 40 that support 14 the first clamping member 16. The pivot bars 40 extend between the first clamping member 16 and the c-shaped frame members 34 and are pivotally attached to the frame members 34. The pivot bars 40 each define channels 42 that matingly receive the corresponding upper arm 38 of the frame members 34 for guiding the pivot bars 40 as the pivot bars 40 pivot during operation of the brake assembly 10. The pivot bars 40 extend beyond respective ends of the upper arm 38 to position the first clamping member 16 beyond the upper arms 38. The second clamping member 18 is fixed to the c-shaped frame members 34 on the respective lower arms 36 and positioned to align with the first clamping member 16 to provide a means for clamping the sheet of material 12.

[0020] A handle member 44 is pivoted to the upper arm 38 of each c-shaped frame member 34 and to the pivot bars 40 by a plurality of extensible links (not shown). The extensible links are pivoted at an upper end to the handle member 44 and at a lower end to the pivot bars 40. The extensible links may be of the type shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,766,757, issued Aug. 30, 1988, U.S. Pat. No. 5,582,053, issued Dec. 10, 1996, and similar sheet bending brakes, incorporated herein by reference.

[0021] Referring to FIG. 3, the first clamping member 16 includes an anvil portion 48 positioned proximal to the second clamping member 18. During operation of the brake assembly 10, the sheet of material 12 is bent about the anvil portion 48, as will be described in further detail below. A slanted portion 50 extends from the anvil portion 48 to support 14 the anvil portion 48. A rear portion 52 extends from the slanted portion 50 and provides an upper surface 54 for attachment of the first clamping member 16 to the pivot bars 40. The rear portion 52 also provides a bottom surface 56 that defines a series of ribs 58. Preferably, the ribs 58 extend along a length of the first clamping member 16.

[0022] The second clamping member 18 includes an upper tubular portion 60 and a lower tubular portion 62. The lower tubular portion 62 includes spaced flanges 64. The second clamping member 18 is fixed to the support 14, more specifically the lower arms 36, at the spaced flanges 64. The second clamping member 18 extends to a projection 66, preferably a plurality of projections 66, adjacent the clamping surface 22 of the second clamping member 18. The projections 66 project beyond the first clamping member 16.

Each projection 66 has a slot 68 formed therein and the slots 68 of the various projections 66 are in longitudinal alignment.

[0023] A bending member 70 includes corresponding projections 72 that mesh with the projections 66 of the second clamping member 18. The corresponding projections 72 have openings, with pins 76 extending through the openings and corresponding slots 76 to hinge the bending member 70 to the second clamping member 18. The bending member 70 further includes a bending portion 78 that extends upwardly and outwardly when the bending member 70 is in a position for bending the sheet of material 12.

[0024] Referring to FIGS. 1, 3, and 4, the measuring device 24 is mounted on the sheet bending brake assembly 10 for measuring the sheet of material 12 extending from the clamping members 16, 18 when the sheet of material 12 is clamped between the clamping members 16, 18. At least one measuring device 24 is mounted to the sheet bending brake assembly 10. Preferably, at least two measuring devices 24 are mounted to the sheet bending brake assembly 10.

[0025] Preferably, as shown in FIGS. 2-4, the base 26 of the measuring device 24 includes a clip 80 for clipping the base 26 onto the brake assembly 10. More specifically, the clip 80 is preferably integral with the base 26 and defines a c-shaped bracket 82. In a preferred embodiment, the c-shaped bracket 82 biasingly engages the first clamping member 16. The c-shaped bracket 82 has an inner surface 84. A flange 86 may be disposed on the inner surface 84 adjacent an end of the c-shaped bracket 82, removed from the base 26, for interacting with at least one of the ribs 58 on the first clamping member 16 to secure the base 26 on the brake assembly 10. The c-shaped bracket 82 also includes a tab 88, which may be lifted to release the c-shaped bracket 82 from the first clamping member 16. Thus, the measuring device 24 may be moved along the length of the first clamping member 16 to measure the sheet of material 12 at various positions along the length of the brake assembly 10. It is to be appreciated that the base 26 may include any variety of mechanisms for securing the measuring device 24 to the brake assembly 10 and, more specifically, the first clamping member 16. For example, the c-shaped bracket 82 may include a spring-loaded post (not shown) that extends through the c-shaped bracket 82, adjacent the flange 86, to interact with at least one of the ribs 58 on the first clamping member 16. Alternatively, the c-shaped bracket 82 may include a screw (not shown) for securing the base 26 onto the first clamping member 16.

[0026] Preferably, the base 26 further includes a hinge wrap 90, which forms part of the pivot 30. The hinge wrap 90 defines a hole (not shown) extending through the hinge wrap 90. The elongated arm 28 is pivotally mounted to the base 26 at the hinge wrap 90, to be described in further detail below.

[0027] Preferably, as shown FIG. 3, the elongated arm 28 is defined by an integral plate and includes a scale portion 94 at the distal end. The elongated arm 28 extends over the second clamping member 18 to position the scale portion 94 outside of the projection 66 when the elongated arm 28 is in the measuring position. Preferably, the elongated arm 28 includes a series of reference markings 96 disposed along the scale portion 94 for measuring the sheet of material 12. The reference markings 96 can be spaced according to

metric units, English units, or any other unit of measure. Preferably, the reference markings **96** are etched onto a surface of the scale portion **94**. Alternatively, the reference markings **96** may be painted onto the surface of the scale portion **94** or included on a label fixed to the scale portion **94** with an adhesive.

[0028] The scale portion **94** extends generally parallel to the clamping surfaces **20, 22** when the elongated arm **28** is in the measuring position. The elongated arm **28** has a center length **98** slanting upwardly from the scale portion **94** and a hinge portion **100** extending from the center length **98** to the pivot **30**. Preferably, the scale portion **94** and the hinge portion **100** are generally parallel whereby the elongated arm **28** is generally z-shaped. Thus, the elongated arm **28** defines a shape to complement a shape of the slanted portion **50** of the first clamping member **16** such that when the elongated arm **28** is pivoted into the measuring position, the scale portion **94** is relatively parallel to the surface of the sheet of material **12**.

[0029] The hinge portion **100** defines a cutout **102** to define bifurcated legs **104**, which form part of the pivot **30**. The bifurcated legs **104** wrap around an axis to form annular knuckles **106** and are positioned on either side of the hinge wrap **90**, with the annular knuckles **106** coaxial with the hinge wrap **90**. A shaft **108** passes through the hinge wrap **90** and the annular knuckles **106** for forming the pivot **30** and connecting the elongated arm **28** to the base **26**. The shaft **108** creates a pivot **30** axis for allowing the pivotal movement of the elongated arm **28** between the measuring position along the sheet of material **12** and the retracted position, spaced from the sheet of material **12**.

[0030] Referring to **FIG. 3**, the measuring device **24** is illustrated in a measuring position on the brake assembly **10** for measuring the sheet of material **12**. As shown in **FIG. 4**, the elongated arm **28** is pivoted into the retracted position, removed from the sheet of material **12**, to allow operation of the brake assembly **10**.

[0031] In use, as shown in **FIG. 3**, the sheet of material **12** is drawn between the first clamping member **16** and the second clamping member **18**, along the respective clamping surfaces **20, 22**. The handle is pivoted, which in turn pivots the first clamping member **16**, to clamp the sheet of material **12** against the second clamping member **18** in preparation for bending of the sheet of material **12**. The measuring device **24** is pivoted into the measuring position to measure a length of the sheet of material **12** extending from the brake assembly **10**. The measuring device **24** may be moved to a different position along the length of the first clamping member **16** to measure the length of the sheet of material **12** at a different point. The elongated arm **28** is pivoted into the second position in preparation for operation of the sheet bending brake assembly **10**.

[0032] Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. The invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described within the scope of the appended claims. In addition, the reference numerals in the claims are merely for convenience and are not to be read in any way as limiting.

What is claimed is:

1. A sheet bending brake assembly comprising:

a support;

first and second clamping members mounted on said support for movement between open and closed positions and having respective clamping surfaces for extending in parallel and opposing relationship to each other in said closed position to clamp a sheet of material therebetween;

a measuring device for measuring the sheet of material relative to said clamping members;

said assembly characterized by said measuring device including a base and an elongated arm pivotally connected to said base at a pivot and extending from said pivot to a distal end for pivotal movement about said pivot between a retracted position and an extended measuring position for overlying the sheet of material.

2. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said base includes a clip for clipping said base onto said assembly.

3. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said elongated arm includes a scale portion at said distal end, said second clamping member being fixed to said support and extending to a projection, said elongated arm extending over said second clamping member to position said scale portion outside of said projection in said measuring position.

4. An assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said first clamping member is a movable clamping member pivotally supported by said support for movement between said open position and said closed position, said base being attached to said movable clamping member.

5. An assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein said base includes a clip for removably clipping said base onto said assembly.

6. An assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein said scale portion extends generally parallel to said clamping surfaces in said measuring position.

7. An assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said elongated arm has a center length slanting upwardly from said scale portion and a hinge portion extending from said center length to said pivot.

8. An assembly as set forth in claim 7 wherein said scale portion and said hinge portion are generally parallel whereby said elongated arm is generally z-shaped.

9. An assembly as set forth in claim 8 wherein said hinge portion defines a cutout to define bifurcated legs wrapping around an axis to form annular knuckles.

10. An assembly as set forth in claim 9 wherein said elongated arm is defined by an integral plate.

11. An assembly as set forth in claim 10 wherein said base further includes a hinge wrap defining a hole extending therethrough.

12. An assembly as set forth in claim 11 wherein said bifurcated legs are positioned on either side of said hinge wrap with said annular knuckles coaxial with said hinge wrap.

13. An assembly as set forth in claim 12 further including a shaft passing through said hinge wrap and said annular knuckles for connecting said elongated arm to said base.

14. An assembly as set forth in claim 13 wherein said clip is integral with said base and defines a c-shaped bracket.

15. An assembly as set forth in claim 14 wherein said c-shaped bracket has an inner surface and a flange disposed on said inner surface for securing said base on said assembly.

16. A measuring device for a sheet bending brake assembly comprising:

a base; and

an elongated arm that is generally z-shaped and pivotally connected to said base at a pivot and extending from said pivot to a distal end for pivotal movement about said pivot between a retracted position and an extended measuring position.

17. A measuring device as set forth in claim 16 wherein said elongated arm has a center length slanting upwardly from said scale portion and a hinge portion extending from said center length to said pivot.

18. A measuring device as set forth in claim 17 wherein said scale portion and said hinge portion are generally parallel.

19. A measuring device as set forth in claim 18 wherein said hinge portion defines a cutout to define bifurcated legs wrapping around an axis to form annular knuckles.

20. A measuring device as set forth in claim 19 wherein said elongated arm is defined by an integral plate.

21. A measuring device as set forth in claim 20 wherein said base includes a clip for clipping said base onto said assembly.

22. A measuring device as set forth in claim 21 wherein said base further includes a hinge wrap defining a hole extending therethrough.

23. A measuring device as set forth in claim 22 wherein said bifurcated legs are positioned on either side of said hinge wrap with said annular knuckles coaxial with said hinge wrap.

24. A measuring device as set forth in claim 23 further including a shaft passing through said hinge wrap and said annular knuckles for connecting said elongated arm to said base.

25. A measuring device as set forth in claim 24 wherein said clip is integral with said base and defines a c-shaped bracket.

26. A measuring device as set forth in claim 25 wherein said c-shaped bracket has an inner surface and a flange disposed on said inner surface for securing said base on the assembly.

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